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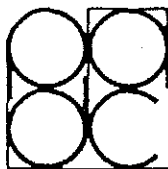
641 Indiana Avenue, NW
(Artifactory)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-593

PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

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WASHINGTON, DC 20004

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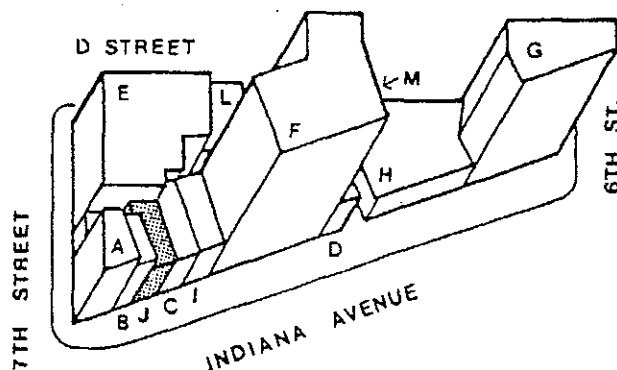
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

HABS No. DC-598

HABS
DC,
WASH,
309-

Artifactory
641 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Lot 818



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 458, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 458, see HABS No. DC-618.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This three-story commercial structure is on a rectangular site measuring 25' in width by 45' in length. Its lot was expanded at the north or rear by the absorption of the alley, on which was built a one-story skylit addition, trapezoidal in plan.

The structure of the building consists of wood joists spanning the building width between brick masonry bearing walls.

Behind a late 19th century wood storefront the front facade retains its original tetrastyle storefront in granite flush with the building face, and offset to the west to allow for a separate entryway to the upper floors. Above, the facade is of brick with three window bays. The rear may have been similar to the front, probably with an alley storefront that is still suggested in spite of the building's expansion beyond its original plan. Above, the three-window-bay brick facade is reiterated.

The interior varies slightly with each floor. The basement was not made accessible by the tenants. It is reportedly one open space and is now undergoing alterations. Aside from the enclosure of the stairs, the first and second floors are open in plan. The first floor is used as a store, the second one as an art gallery. While the original wood plank floors remain on all levels, the wall plaster on the second floor has been removed to expose the original masonry work. The third floor has been thoroughly refinished for a dwelling unit, integrating, at the rear or north, enclosures for bathroom and kitchen. There are two skylights through the slightly-pitched flat roof.

The stair from ground to third floors is an enclosed straight-run that provides access to the second level at an intermediate landing. It runs adjacent to the east party wall. At the second floor landing, the bearing wall masonry shows a currently bricked-in opening to the building next door.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Although there are no records, this building appears to have been built as early as 1817, definitely not later than 1827 (Tax Records and City Directories). The cultural value of this structure lies more in its age rather than in its Greek Revival design elements. When taken in conjunction with its two contemporary and similar neighbors, these three buildings acquire an enormous historical value for the city of Washington. Taken together, they are apparently the oldest commercial structures extant in the city.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Facade: The main facade presents a three-bay organization over an asymmetrically-positioned storefront whose granite piers and lintels are now covered by projecting wooden show windows with a continuous denticulated cornice above. In addition to this alteration, several previous ones are recorded (Building Permit #493, 8/29/1890; Building Permit #689 1/2, 11/20/1907). At present, the door to the shop is centrally recessed between two show windows. The entire storefront assembly spans 3/4 of the facade's western width, with the eastern quarter dedicated to access through double wood doors to the stairs leading to the upper floors. On the upper two stories, the facade is faced in brick. The three bays contain one jack-arched window per floor. The sills are all wood, and these as well as the wood lintels are covered with wood boards. All the sash are recent replacements. They are wooden double-hung units with eight-over-eight lights.



Indiana Avenue Facade (South)

Lot 6 (Sublot 3, 818)
641 Louisiana Avenue

1792.....David Burnes owned the property (Record of Deeds, Liber A, Folio 1).

1799.....David Burnes died and William Whetcroft bought Lot 6.

1812.....Anne and Alexander Kerr, William Whetcroft's son-in-law and daughter inherited Lots 2 and 3 of Lot 6 (Deed, Liber A-30, Folio 157).

1924.....Tax books showed the value of the two lots together to be \$696.00, and the value of the two buildings together to be \$1,200.00.

1829/33...Alexander Kerr was assessed for \$524.00 for the ground.

1844.....Alexander Kerr's heirs were assessed \$773.00 for the property.

1851.....The property was sold to J. A. Ober (Deeds, Liber JAS 54, Folio 255).

1852.....The property was sold for \$9,000.00 to B. F. Morsell (Deeds, Liber JAS 64, Folio 10).

1852

to

1873.....B. F. Morsell, a grocer, appeared in the City Directories as the tenant tenant of the building.

1853.....Mathew G. Emery was assessed at \$9,500.00.

1870.....Mathew G. Emery was elected Mayor.

The lot was assessed to Mathew G. Emery at \$8,500.00.

1872/73...Mathew Emery was assessed at \$3,542.00.

1876

to

1881.....Thomas J. Brashears, a printer, was listed as the occupant.

1878/79...The lot was reassessed to Mathew G. Emery \$3,542.00.

1883

to

1895.....John C. Entwistle, a lithographer was listed in the City Directory as the proprietor.

1889

to

1916.....Francis Germuiller was the occupant of 641 Louisiana Avenue, and operated a harness, saddle, and truck business.

1893/94...The property was assessed to Mathew G. Emery at a ground value of \$4,508.00 with improvements of \$2,800.00.

1895.....The title was transferred to Clara Henkle (Deed, Liber 2614, Folio 19).

1897

to

1906.....The City Directory list E. Montrop & Co., painters, as the occupant.

1899/

1900.....The property, again, was assessed to M. G. Emery at a total value of \$7,008.00.

1901.....The title was transferred to Ruth Emery Laird.

1907.....On November 20, Clara Henkle was granted a permit to replace the base and the framing for the show windows (Permit #1689½, Contractor: J. Maurice Baden).

1922

to

1967.....The City Directory lists the Central Furniture Company as the occupant of the building.

1927.....The title was transferred to Juliette Cox (Deed, Liber 4343, Folio 12).

1949.....The title was transferred to Hazel Van Zandt Parks (Deeds, Liber 91022, Folio #387).

1950.....The building is turned over to Solomon Malkin and his wife Esther
(Liber 9180, Folio 450).

1973

to

1981.....The proprietor Dominick Cardella operates the Artifactory at this
lot. Presently it is used as an oriental commodities shop on the first
floor, an art gallery on the second floor and a private residence on
the third floor.

SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map